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ACTION AF-00

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	DOEE-00	PERC-00	DS-00	EAP-00	EB-00	EUR-00	OIGO-00
	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	M-00
	NEA-00	DCP-00	NRC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OES-00	OIC-00
	NIMA-00	PA-00	MCC-00	GIWI-00	PRS-00	P-00	FMPG-00
	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	EPAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2551

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
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AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 001615

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/C, DRL, G, INR, S/P, R; LONDON AND
PARIS FOR AFRICAWATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2015
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [CD](#)
SUBJECT: CHAD: DEMOCRACY PROMOTION STRATEGY

REF: A. STATE 191395

[¶](#)B. NDJAMENA 1134
[¶](#)C. (04) NDJAMENA 1725

Classified By: P/E Officer Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: The United States has important interests at stake and a potentially decisive role to play in promoting democracy in Chad. Earlier this year, President Deby succeeded in removing presidential term limits in a constitutional (but questionable) process, and is now on the path to remain President-for-life. Recent army defections, emergence of activity by armed opponents, and dissension within the family seem to confirm that if Deby continues in power beyond his current mandate, he is setting the stage for an unconstitutional and possible violent change in power. Such an outcome could be damaging to our interests in the Darfur peace process, humanitarian assistance to 200,000 Sudanese refugees, counter-terrorism efforts, and support for transparent oil revenue management. Setting the stage for a peaceful, democratic transition is the desired outcome for the next six to eight months. We believe that encouraging Deby to retire is critical and should be the centerpiece of our diplomatic strategy. Specific actions and resources that would bolster these efforts include a definitive statement against removal of term limits, invitations to visit Washington, coordination with France, the EU, and like-minded African leaders, election support, and help with a face-saving exit strategy. We should also work to improve financial management in Chad, reform its military, and strengthen its democratic institutions. Many Chadians are looking to the United States for leadership in promoting democratic change. There is no guarantee that even a well-managed transition would avoid upheaval. But given the potential for even more serious instability if we do not take action, it is important to take steps to convince Deby to manage Chad's next political transition. End Summary.

[¶](#)2. (SBU) The following assessment responds to ref A request for a focused democracy promotion strategy. It identifies key areas of democratic deficits (para 5), outlines desired outcomes (para 6), presents a six-month strategy (paras 7-11), identifies specific needs (para 12), discusses major impediments (paras 13-16), and considers consequences of a reform agenda (para 17). The role of the international community is addressed in paras 4, 9, and 11. The GOC's support for democracy promotion is included in the discussion of major impediments.

Backdrop

13. (C) In refs B and C, we outlined the consequences of the removal of presidential term limits in Chad and Deby's likely intent to remain in office for life. Despite his "victory" in amending the Constitution, the regime was shaken by the low voter turn-out, which revealed the ruling party's inability to win the referendum. Recent military defections and the military's refusal to attack the deserters have weakened the President's position with the military and among his closest family members. Deby now needs large amounts of cash to use in negotiations with military deserters, disgruntled family members, and other armed opposition groups and to regain lost political ground. As a result, the already-cash strapped government, recently ranked the most corrupt in the world by Transparency International, announced it is proceeding with the revision of the oil revenue management law to increase the amount of money flowing directly into Government coffers.

14. (C) Rumors about the President's poor health circulate often. Talk about upcoming presidential elections are muted as the opposition refuses to participate without the revision of the electoral code and the electoral lists. Meanwhile, military deserters, armed opposition groups in the north and east, deserters in the west, and various armed elements along Chad's southern border are increasing the regime's need for arms to defend itself. The Government has publicly accused neighboring Sudan of supporting Chadian rebels and privately mentions Libya's dubious intentions as a key concern. The potential scenarios for change, as outlined in Ref B, are unpredictable and likely violent.

Overcoming Democratic Deficits

15. (C) Key areas of democratic deficits include weak institutions such as the ruling party-dominated National Assembly; personality and regionally-based opposition parties; a barely functioning judicial system susceptible to executive interference; a bloated, untrained, unpaid, ethnic-based military; poorly educated population; high levels of corruption; and lack of respect for human rights and rule of law.

Desired Outcomes

16. (C) As we argued over a year ago (ref C), we are convinced that our overarching strategy should focus on persuading President Deby not to seek a third term and to assist in the management of a peaceful, democratic transition. The ruling Movement for Patriotic Salvation (MPS) Congress, which will nominate its candidate for President, may be held in December. We need to move quickly to discourage the President from seeking the nomination and instead select another MPS member to run or establish a political transition committee to oversee Chad's next elections. As outlined in greater detail in the following paragraphs, over the next six to eight months, the desired outcome would be:

-- convincing Deby not to run for a third term;

In the event that Deby takes himself out of the race, we recommend:

-- promotion of political dialogue about the electoral process and other issues of national concern to set the stage for elections;

-- assistance with electoral support to revise the existing electoral list and electoral law;

-- assistance to transform the Chadian military from a clan-based to a genuinely national and professional force.

Strategy for Encouraging Deby Not to Seek Third Term

17. (C) We must act immediately to set in motion our strategy to persuade Deby not to run for a third term. For this strategy to succeed, the Department, at the highest level, must make public statements against the removal of term limits and/or seeking additional terms. Our support for Constitutional changes as long as they are done legally has ignored the undeniable reality that many democratic institutions in African countries are tools of entrenched rulers that manipulated them to stay in office for life and

provide little development to their populations. We should not pretend that the "people", many of whom fear the repercussions of opposing undemocratic reforms, accept such change because they refuse to participate in a rigged process and do not take to the streets in protest.

18. (C) Several other African countries are in the process of or have already changed their constitutions. We need to articulate a strong policy message in favor of alternating power as a means of consolidating democratic change in Africa. A speech by Secretary Rice, Deputy Secretary Zoellick followed up with contact with African leaders, including Deby by the Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Issues, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and other high-level USG interlocutors could provide Ambassadors and Embassy staff the necessary support needed to pursue genuine democratic change in Chad and other countries facing the same fate. An invitation to visit Washington is a symbolic gesture that Deby has longed for. An offer to receive him should he decide to step down would be an incentive for him to make that decision. We can also remind him that he would leave behind an important legacy if he can arrange to retire peacefully. Appealing to his ego is a key point of leverage.

19. (C) A second component of this strategy is developing a consensus among allies and other diplomatic missions to support our strategy. Recently relayed French concerns about Chad's future prospects may be the beginning of a dialogue with the major player here. A coordinated Washington-Paris effort supported by our contacts on the ground would be critical to the success of this strategy. It will also be important to mobilize key African leaders, sitting and retired, to make the case to Deby for stepping down. In a larger context, we should lobby the African Union to make public statements and develop positive and negative sanctions to discourage potential Presidents-for-life.

110. (C) Thirdly, Deby, his family, and his tribe need an exit strategy. Developing post-presidential pursuits for Deby could sweeten the pot. However, he is under considerable pressure from his immediate and extended family to remain in power for their own protection and perks. Many Zaghawa fear significant reprisals once they are no longer in power. A face-saving exit, perhaps through tacit national agreement on a Zaghawa successor acceptable to other ethnic leaders may be a potential solution.

111. (C) We repeatedly hear those around Deby say that his fear of reprisal is a key reason he would rather die in office than be pursued. The Chadian political opposition has repeatedly said that they would give Deby amnesty for his crimes and that he could remain in Chad. However, the recent indictment of former President Hissene Habre by a Belgian court and reported statements by Habre's lawyer that Idriss Deby is as culpable means that a new Chadian Government would not be able to guarantee that Deby could escape international prosecution in exchange for stepping down.

Needs for USG Support

112. (C) Should Deby decide to leave or otherwise depart the scene prematurely, we must be prepared to support a genuine political transition, albeit less-than-perfect and probably less-than-democratic. Deby could decide to groom a ruling party member, likely a Zaghawa, to run in his place and then attempt to rig the process for his candidate to win. We could help make the process as transparent as possible. An alternative is to recognize that it will not be possible to have sound elections before the expiration of the presidential mandate and support the appointment of a political transition committee. This committee could be made up of the ruling party and its allies, political opposition parties, armed opponents, military, technocrats, civil society and religious groups that would be headed by someone that agrees not to run for office. This group would oversee the next elections and deal with other transitional issues. There are various permutations of such a group floating around between the opposition camps and the government. We

would need to be prepared to provide technical assistance to support a revision of the electoral lists and electoral law, election monitoring, political party assistance, and voter education.

Removing Impediments: Improving Financial Management,...

113. (C) Emphasizing the transparent and accountable expenditure of Chad's oil revenues as well as other revenues is fundamental to ensuring stability of an incoming government, which will need funds to function. Chad was recently named the most corrupt country in the world by

Transparency International. We are concerned about the temptation of looting of the Chadian Treasury and oil revenues by an outgoing regime leaving empty coffers for any incoming government. Chad is already on this path. Deby is finding it necessary to make regular "withdrawals" to negotiate with his armed opponents and to shore up his base with his family and military. A U.S. Treasury advisor recently arrived to assist in strengthening capacity for transparent management of oil revenues. Additional support for improving public financial management in concert with the World Bank and other partners will be needed.

... Reforming Chad's Military,...

¶14. (C) Democratic change in Chad depends heavily on military reform. We cannot ignore the importance of finding ways and means to support the transformation of the Chadian military into a downsized, professional, and national force. If not, the ethnic-based military will remain an impediment to democratic change. An immediate need is the regular payment of salaries, which could provide an immediate improvement in the security situation in Chad, not to mention boost morale. We are providing training to one unit of the Chadian army under the Trans-Sahara Counter-terrorism Initiative and various IMET programs. Visits to Chad by senior U.S. military officials could help deliver our message of support for democratic change in Chad and relay to military officials the costs of participating in an irregular change in power. Earlier this year, the Chadian military began to take steps to address its problems, conducting an internal review of the Army which recommended a number of major reforms, including downsizing, which would require the de-mobilization of thousands of uneducated, untrained soldiers. We would seek creative ways to fund the de-mobilization and re-training of soldiers, such as the creation of a separate Ministry of Veteran's Affairs to provide services, educational opportunities, training, and buy-outs to encourage soldiers to leave the military. Without these types of initiatives, it will be impossible to downsize and professionalize the military.

... And Building Democratic Institutions

¶15. (U) We are already providing support to build the capacity of the judiciary and the National Assembly through the use of Economic Support Funds. We would like to solicit additional ESF funds or visitor exchanges to do additional capacity-building. The fledgling Ministry for Moralization and State Control and the Ministry for Human Rights are desperate for financial, logistic, and training assistance. These ministries are tasked with providing accountability within the government and protecting of human rights. Support for these ministries could help raise their public profile, change negative behaviors, and erode the culture of impunity and violence that has become a dominant characteristic in the day-to-day lives of Chadians. We are proposing to use TSCTI public diplomacy funding for programs

with these ministries. Excess USG furniture and equipment donations would also assist these officials in carrying out their duties.

¶16. (U) Likewise, human rights groups remain underfunded and limited in their activities. Human rights associations are full of talented and committed individuals, but lack mobility, basic office equipment, and resources for programs such as providing legal defense for victims of human rights abuses. We will also seek opportunities through visitor exchanges and perhaps, educational and training opportunities, for human rights groups. The goal is not only to help strengthen the connection between human rights groups and the Chadian population, but also to enhance their credibility with the government. Despite this summer's arrest of journalists, Chad has a vibrant, free, independent press, which we should continue to support. Our training efforts to improve investigative reporting and enhance the capacity of the Arabophone press could be funded through additional ESF funds.

Consequences: Risks of Promoting Democratic Transition

¶17. (C) Convincing Deby not to run is not without risk for us. Although Deby has said that he is tired and has not yet officially stated that he is going to run for a third term, we still could alienate Deby, the key player in any transition scenario. The Ambassador's Independence Day speech emboldened many in Chad hoping for democratic change, but Deby reacted harshly. There is a risk that he would similarly view U.S. efforts to convince him to leave power as siding with his enemies. To minimize this risk, we need

strong backing from Washington and a coordinated message from other members of the diplomatic community. We need to be seen giving tangible assistance, not promises, to put Chad on the right path forward. The country has never had a peaceful handover of power in its post-independence history. Its chances for doing so now -- and its future as a stable, cooperative partner with us on Darfur, refugees, counter-terrorism, and oil -- depend on creating the conditions for a genuine democratic transition. We can make a difference by our efforts toward encouraging a more peaceful, democratic future for Chad.

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